

PRATT (Wm.)

A PHYSICIAN'S SERMON

TO

YOUNG MEN.

BY

WILLIAM PRATT,

MASTER OF ARTS, DOCTOR OF MEDICINE, FELLOW OF THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF
SURGEONS OF ENGLAND, AND LICENTIATE OF THE ROYAL
COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS OF LONDON.

Text: "Flee youthful lusts."—PAUL TO TIMOTHY.



NEW YORK:
M. L. HOLBROOK & CO.

A PHYSICIAN'S SERMON

TO

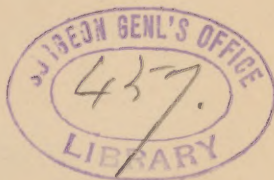
YOUNG MEN.

BY

WILLIAM PRATT,

MASTER OF ARTS, DOCTOR OF MEDICINE, FELLOW OF THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF
SURGEONS OF ENGLAND, AND LICENTIATE OF THE ROYAL
COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS OF LONDON.

Text: "Flee youthful lusts."—PAUL TO TIMOTHY.



NEW YORK:
M. L. HOLBROOK & CO.

PREFACE.

MY attention was first called to this little book by the following editorial notice of the same written by Professor R. P. Proctor and published in his valuable Journal, *Knowledge*. It was this most favorable notice which induced me to procure a copy; and after reading, I resolved to republish it and to include Professor Proctor's words in the preface. No words of mine could be so appropriate. They are as follows.

“Through false delicacy, many lads and youths are left to fall into trouble, and not a few have their prospects of healthy and happy life absolutely ruined. The knowledge kept from them by those

whose duty it is to impart it wisely, and with proper explanation of its vital importance, they learn (too many of them) from foolish talk and to the accompaniment of silly and unseemly jests. The experience essential to their safety they acquire through the evil consequences from which it might have saved them—as it certainly saves all who, having sense, are worth saving.

“The little book before us, of fewer than fifty pages, is intended to be put into the hands of young men by fathers who are unwilling or incapable of discharging a father’s duty in this respect. And as not one father in ten is, we believe, ready to do what is right by his boys, himself, it is well that such a book as this should be available, especially as it gives some information which a physician is able to give with special authority. We commend it to the attention of fathers and sons alike ; to the former, as showing what they should tell their boys ; to the latter, as containing lessons which they should take to heart.

“A lad must be foolish indeed if he does not pay attention to the physical lessons conveyed in this most useful little work. If it is read by all

who ought to read such a book, its sale will be counted by hundreds of thousands."

I hope that there may be many who will be so pleased with the little work as to feel it a pleasure and duty to aid in its distribution where it may do most good.

M. L. H.

A PHYSICIAN'S SERMON

TO

YOUNG MEN.

MY YOUNG FRIENDS :

I am about to address you on a delicate subject. I shall endeavor to use as much delicacy as possible ; still I am determined not to sacrifice plainness to any false modesty.

I remember well my own hot youth, with all its cravings and conflicts, when, without a friend to advise or counselor to guide, I worried myself frequently without a cause, endured miseries which might certainly have been alleviated, if not entirely removed, and committed mistakes which might have been easily avoided. I promised myself then that if ever I reached maturity, I would give to a future generation the benefit of the lessons learned by my own hard experience, as well as of those derived from my special knowledge as a Physician. I now fulfill that promise.

Of the youthful lusts against which Paul warns the young Timothy, the principal are connected undoubtedly with the sexual appetite. This is that natural instinct which moralists style passion, which poets call love, and which divines brand as

concupiscence. In order to avoid all possible misunderstandings, we shall give it the unvarnished name given to it by philosophers, "appetite of sex."

The moment a young person of the male sex arrives at puberty, he is influenced by this appetite. Naturally the new-born child turns to its mother for gratification of its newly awakened appetite for food ; in a manner equally natural does the young man look for gratification of an appetite which, dormant hitherto, bursts into activity from fifteen to eighteen years of age. To experience this appetite, with its desires and impulses, with its bodily longings, and mental imaginings, is simply natural. To think or say that there is anything wrong or sinful about that is absurd. It is part and parcel of our nature. Not to have all that is to be either unwell or unmanly. And not to have all that is to miss much pleasure, and many delights which come only once in a lifetime. For upon a strict analysis it is this appetite which is bubbling over in all the fun and frolic of youth. It is it which inspires the young poet, which fires the ardent lover, which animates the bold adventurer, and casts a witchery of romance over the years from seventeen to twenty-five.

Now if we were living in a natural state of society, the union of the two sexes would follow soon after puberty as a matter of course. In marriage this appetite would find its legitimate gratification, and the human system be left undisturbed by those askings and denyings which in early manhood so frequently torture and upset it. But far from

living in a natural, we live in a most conventional society, in which early marriage is nearly always impossible. The question accordingly arises, What are young men to do, tormented by an appetite which in many an ardent nature is a real demon ?

Before speaking of what is done, or of what ought to be done, I will say a few words concerning early marriage.

EARLY MARRIAGE.

I am in favor of early marriage. It is nature's appointed plan for gratifying and calming youthful passion. Unfortunately the middle-class world scowls upon early wedlock, and stamps it as a most impudent thing for young people to marry who have not the income of their fathers. Mrs. Grundy keeps her finger ever lifted high, and cries, "Don't. Anything but that !" And generally it is anything but that ! Yet I say to young people, if you have good health, and if you be sensible enough to despise the notions of a foolish society, and not to seek to ape the rich in their style of living ; if you can live on plain fare, that is to say no wines nor beers, and only birchen furniture, and not be in the least disturbed because Mr. So-and-So dines better, and Mrs. So-and-So dresses better—if you can do this as common-sense, strong-minded men and women, if you love one another, and understand one another's minds, and are willing to strive uphill together, then—marry. You will be happier, you will be steadier, you will be purer, and in every likelihood you will succeed better in

the world; and having learned and practiced contentment with little, when prosperity comes you will be the better able to turn it to good account for yourselves and others. That is excellent advice of the old saying, "Marry for love, and work for money." And there are some good things in this quaint Scottish song :

" When John and me were married,
 Our hauding was but sma',
 For my minnie, cankert carlin,
 Wou'd gie us nocht at a',
 I spent my fee wi' canny care,
 As far as it wou'd gae,
 But well I wot our bridal bed
 Was clean pea strae.

" Wi' working late and early
 We're come to what ye see,
 For fortune throve beneath our hands,
 So busy aye were we.
 The lowe o' love made labor light,
 I'm sure ye'll find it sac,
 Tho' ye should mak your bridal bed
 O' clean pea strae."

Do not believe for a moment that the poetry of life is exhausted when the marriage knot is tied. The post-connubial bliss is sweet if it be sober, and durable if it be gentle. Novelists generally wind up their tales at marriage, as the bourne beyond which no story can go. After that all must be tame. And poets have sung most ardently of the pleasures of courtship, as if Hymen extinguished all delights. And satirists have chuckled and laughed over the sorrows and troubles, the scoldings and quarrels of ill-matched or brutal wedlock.

And in many circles there is talk of the bands and bonds of matrimony, and of the necessity to have out one's fling before sacrificing one's liberty. But all that needs no refutation. In a physical point of view—with which view we have principally to do here—the wedded life is the complete life of man. A man without a woman is an incomplete being, and his life is an imperfect existence. Even in a social aspect it is the wedded life which is the foundation of every community, great or small, which means to endure. And certainly the joys of home, and the pleasures of family, though they be accompanied by some cares, far outweigh all the enjoyments of single life, dignified though it may be by the euphemism of single blessedness. There is much and genuine poetry in sharing sorrows with another, all whose sympathy is sure, in the soft prattle by a mother's knee, and in little arms twining round a father's neck—ininitely more than in the shout of bacchanalians, or in the songs of hired sirens.

Not that I wish to be understood as advising hasty, ill-concocted marriages, or marriages formed without the consent of parents and guardians. By no manner of means. Nearly all such marriages turn out wretchedly ill. All I recommend is marriage, though the means be comparatively scanty, if the health be good, the heart sound, and the prospect fair. At the same time I never counsel any young man to rush into matrimony without studying for a considerable time his proposed life-comrade ; and I would add that both he and she

should together look at their probable future, and be prepared hopefully to face difficulties, and, if needs be, to bear penury. The union of two such sensible people will always meet with the approbation of sensible parents. There is no fear for such a couple. They may begin with a bridal couch of "pea straw"—though such a lowly commencement is generally not commendable. But if you be without fortune, and the intended help-mate is too delicate or too dainty to help herself, or to look after the details of a household, from the making of a bed to the cooking of a potato, it is better to abstain from wedlock, at least for the present. To marry under such circumstances would certainly be rash. Poverty is almost sure to come upon such an ill-starred, helpless pair, and, "as poverty comes in at the door, love will fly out at the window." The objects for which marriage has been entered into, namely, home and its comforts, will be unattained, and the very vices which marriage was meant to prevent will very likely not be avoided, but being committed by a married man, they will be rendered more hideous, and perhaps be aggravated, as is too often the case, by the additional vice of inebriety.

Of course by early marriage I do not mean marriage when the first sensations of sex are felt. Marriage before twenty-one in either man or woman is to be deprecated. It is not healthful. The human frame is not sufficiently matured, and as a consequence the offspring are almost sure to be weakly, while the parents are apt to have their

own health completely shattered. According to the statistics, the married life is not only the purer, producing the minimum of evil-doers and criminals; it is also by far the most healthy. Take the male sex, and it is seen that from twenty-five to thirty years of age, 1,000 married men furnish 6 deaths; 1,000 bachelors furnish 10 deaths; 1,000 widowers furnish 22 deaths. The figures, however, become very unfavorable if the marriage be contracted before twenty. Out of 8,000 young men married before twenty, their mortality has been found to be, before marriage, only 7 per 1,000; after marriage, 50 per 1,000. With respect to the female sex we find a similar advantage of marriage over celibacy, but on the same condition. If young girls be turned into wives before twenty a like mortality befalls them which befalls the other sex. Everywhere young married people from eighteen to twenty years of age die as fast as old people from sixty to seventy years of age. The common sense and common law of Western Europe have with perfect justice marked twenty-one as the age of maturity. After that epoch, however, marriage should be contracted as soon as practicable. It is the healthiest and the happiest life; the best for the individual and for the community.

Timorous legislators and disciples of Malthus deny that early marriage is the best for a country already well peopled. Accordingly they throw all manner of obstacles in its way. They compel the mass of our soldiers and sailors to be bachelors. They offer the majority of public appointments to

unmarried men, as premiums for celibacy. This is, however, a bad policy. By it our rulers encourage a vast amount of sin and wickedness, and foster a contagious disease which no Act of Parliament will ever remove, and ultimately induce a diminution in the general health and vigor of the population. It would certainly be more in conformity with morality and with true statecraft did our public men rather encourage emigration, provide education, and advocate upon every platform economy and moderation in eating, drinking, and dressing, and give the example in their own homes and persons, so as to form a public opinion which should stamp respectability, not upon the men of large income and good clothing, but upon the men of simple worth, irrespective of all externals. At the same time most offices should be given in preference to the honest struggling married men, and that horrible phrase "without incumbrances" should be banished from our language, and expunged from among the articles of every appointment. Early marriage might then become the fashion, to the great diminution of vice, and without the least increase of our pauperism. On the very contrary, the descendants of young, vigorous, and healthy parents would be vigorous and healthful themselves, and simply but sufficiently fed, well educated, and nourished in every good principle, they would grow up sure of success in the world; and did ever the old folks need help, which after a life of thrift and virtue would be an exception, the children would be the first ungrudgingly to give it.

Parents in the workhouse with sons and daughters living would be unknown. Again an old song :

“ When Sandy, Jock, and Janetie
Are up and gotten lair,
They’ll help to make the boatie row,
And lessen a’ our care.
* * * *

“ When we are auld and sair bowed down,
And hirplin frae the door,
They’ll help to keep us warm and dry
As we did them before.”
* * * *

But early marriage, one way or another, is impossible. Then as a kind of substitute for it we have secret indulgence, called also onanism, masturbation, self-pollution, and self-abuse. This practice does not require any definition. It is shockingly common, and is more especially the besetting sin of early puberty—of young men at school and college. It is also said, we shall hope falsely, to exist to a sad extent in all unmixed male communities, such as boys’ boarding-schools, priests’ seminaries, monasteries, and similar institutions.

Now, to say the least of it, this self-abuse is an unnatural, nasty practice. And more, it is a practice most injurious to the body. Onanism is a vice which cannot be practiced without eventually injuring the body most seriously. It causes the waste of a most excellent fluid—a fluid which when not uselessly spent, re-enters the blood at least in part, to give it fire and energy. But very soon

this waste takes place, not only directly but indirectly. Emissions occur frequently of a night without any manipulation. By-and-by they take place day and night involuntarily, without handling and without pleasure. There is thus set up a regular drain of seminal matter, which rapidly brings on exhaustion. This exhaustion in weakly constitutions will induce or encourage consumption, and even in the strongest frames it will end in nervous and muscular debility, with a long train of real and imaginary pains and evils.

And while injuring the body, this vice has an equally baneful influence over the mind. The imagination becomes polluted, the conception becomes defiled, the will is weakened, the dreams are rendered impure, the whole intellectual and moral life becomes unclean. In the course of a short time the subject of this wretched habit is unwell in his body, and unwell in his mind, without ambition, without energy, and without courage, thoroughly demoralized, fit for nothing.

It may be thought strange that this practice should produce such disastrous effects, whereas the connection in marriage is altogether beneficial. Such, however, is the fact. To account for it there are many reasons. The first is the entire unnaturalness of onanism. Then the immaturity of the frames of those by whom it is practiced. Then it does not give that satisfaction or satiety which marriage gives. This leads to a repetition and a re-repetition of its evil acts, till functions are deranged and the general system is harmed.

Add thereto the baseness of the indulgence, which injures the mind directly as well as through the body, and we have some explanation of the noxious effects of this sinful practice. For it is sinful. That is to say, before God this fornication with self, or this adultery with self, is a sin as grave as any of the more direct violations of the Seventh Commandment. The man who has given his infamous name to the filthy vice met with severe and immediate punishment. And the greatest Teacher has said, "He that looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart." Here the very principle which calls onanism into existence, and which gives it life, is condemned, much more the practice which commences in a lusting heart, and ends in making the heart utterly depraved.

Now this bastard gratification of the sexual appetite Paul knew well. It was common enough among the young Jews, Greeks, and Romans of his day. It is one of the lusts against which he warns Timothy. It is one of the "fleshly lusts" which, Peter says, "war against the soul." It does so desperately, to the soul's complete subjugation and defilement. Flee, therefore, this youthful lust. In the name of religion, in the name of soul and body, I ask you to avoid it. And if unhappily you have been overcome by it, in the same great names I appeal to you to abandon it. It is undoubtedly difficult to give up. Still, abandoned it must and ought to be. No half measures with it. The drunkard cannot reform by becoming a

moderate drinker. Nor can the poor victims of this vice get the better of it by limiting themselves to occasional indulgence. Relinquished it is to be completely by a mighty and continued effort, though this effort be painful as the cutting off a right hand, or the plucking out a right eye. Again, the greatest Teacher has spoken these stern words : " If thy right hand offend thee, cut it off ; or if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out : it is better to enter into life halt or maimed, than having two eyes or two hands to be cast into hell fire."

Another substitute for marriage we have in illicit intercourse.

This requires less defining than the preceding substitute. Called by the various names of fornication, adultery, uncleanness, lasciviousness, and incontinence, it has always been, and at the present day is, the great vice of society. Practiced in the country, it produces its fruits in the shame and sorrows of illegitimacy. Practiced in towns, it keeps alive whole armies of fair sinners, who disgrace our streets, people our hospitals, and fill our jails. And following closely upon the heels of this vice comes a hideous disease, which very few of its devotees escape. This disease prevails to a perfectly incredible extent. It may be mild or malignant. It may be easily and rapidly got rid of, not however without much pain and much fright ; or it may poison the whole system, and extend its fell consequences to the third and fourth generations.

Illicit intercourse is greatly condemned in the female sex. Every woman of worth shrinks from her fallen sister, and the vilest words in our language are used to designate her. But, strange enough, the sin is not equally condemned in the male sex. Society calls a fornicator or an adulterer only a gay man, or a dashing fellow. Young men guilty of immorality are only styled fast; and respected matrons and virtuous maidens who would flee from an unclean woman with more horror than from the small-pox, tolerate and even smile upon the rake and debauchee. But however partial society may be in its blame, God is impartial. And if there be any bias at all, it will assuredly be against the male accomplice. He who said to the woman caught in adultery, "Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more," possibly would not have been so easy if her paramour had been brought before Him. At all events the men of unclean lives and actions shall be put upon exactly the same footing as the harlots before God. And if there be a sin more frequently and more severely condemned than another in Scripture, it is this. Again and again it is said, "Whoremongers and adulterers God will judge;" and, "Whoremongers shall not inherit the kingdom of God."

And God is not only offended, and heaven forfeited by this sin, but the whole moral being is fearfully damaged by it. We might be sure that this would be the case when God so sternly prohibits it. If ever God forbid a deed, it is not simply because it is offensive to Him, but because it is

injurious to ourselves. God Himself says : “ He that sinneth against Me, wrongs his own soul.” And Paul says : “ Who *past feeling* have given themselves up to work all uncleanness with greediness.” And Burns says pithily :

“ I waive the quantum of the sin,
The hazard of concealing,
But oh ! it hardens a’ within,
And petrifies the *feeling*.”

Libertinage destroys all that is soft, delicate, and tender in the human heart. In a very brief time the sensualist becomes completely hardened, indifferent to all that is good, pure, and true, lost to all that is beautiful in the world and worthy in humanity, bent entirely upon self-gratification. His very nature is entirely spoiled, and whether there be a gloss of polite manners over it or not, it is underneath the surface rotten and corrupt ; and in a future state of existence, were it possible to admit the libertine into the society of the pure, and therefore the happy, he himself would find it intolerable, and be the very first to ask permission to leave it.

Likewise, sooner or later, the body suffers from indulgence in this intercourse. If the individual escape a specific disease, which very few even of the most practiced men about town, with all their craft and cunning, do escape—kings have died of it—or if even he be perfectly cured of it, still the life of illicit intercourse produces early decay. The powers of the body fail from the unnatural

strain put upon them, the capacity for indulgence departs even while the pampered appetite is still living and craving, and a premature old age and a dishonored grave close the scene while other men are yet almost in their prime.

Now it is this form of gratification of the sexual appetite against which more particularly Paul warns Timothy. Among all the nations and peoples of antiquity it was practiced to a really horrible extent. Bad as modern society is, it is not polluted to the fearful degree of heathendom, when fornication was perpetrated in public, and fathers could witness the defilement of their daughters. Yea ! so far were the unbridled appetites allowed to proceed, that men, abandoning the natural use of women, burned toward men, and to creatures lower than men, and vices were practiced and acts done which Paul attempts to expose in the beginning of his letter to the Romans, and of which we cannot think or write without blushing. Bad as we are, we are certainly not so bad as old pagandom. The salt of Christianity has preserved us from that depth of corruption. Still there is room for vast improvement in all society, British as well as continental, high as well as low, in the country as well as in our towns. And I join heartily with Paul in calling upon all "to flee fornication." It "wars against the soul" to its complete destruction. Be not misled by the dangerous advice sometimes given by pseudo-scientific men, to indulge occasionally and carefully. The counsel is radically bad. The appetite

once indulged will soon and naturally demand another indulgence, and the occasional indulgence will soon grow into a frequent indulgence to your complete enslavement. The life with a mistress, even if it be only with one, is a life of moral degradation and slavery, ending almost of a certainty in financial embarrassment. Of course the fair Anonyma is yours only because of your purse, in which alone she has an interest, which she will empty, and when it is empty she will cast you off with as little concern as she would cast away a withered leaf.

If you will not believe the bachelor Paul in his denunciations of fornication, listen to the old rake Solomon, who knew more about this matter than most men. In his pithy Book of Proverbs, which I advise every young man to read over a dozen times and more, he says, "to deliver thee from the strange woman. Her house inclineth unto death, and her paths unto the dead. None that go unto her return again, neither take they hold of the paths of life." And again, "By means of a whorish woman a man is brought to a piece of bread." And again, in the seventh chapter, there is a masterly description of the temptation by a harlot, concluding with the solemn words, "Her house is the way to hell, going down to the chambers of death."

As for any pleasure in this intercourse, there is none worth the name. The sense of it being a sin, the dread of physical consequences, and the fear of being found out, are so many sharp thorns

in the pillow of the fornicator or adulterer. Add the remorse which follows the commission of each separate act of wickedness, and which more than outweighs any delight. Certainly, at length the conscience is quite seared ; but ere that, familiarity has reduced the pleasure to a minimum, all pleasure being henceforth in the idea, and not in the reality. Whoever would taste the pure, permanent and undiluted delights of woman must seek them, not in the brothel, nor in any forbidden path, but solely in the chaste embraces of wedded love. Listen once more to Solomon : “ As for him that wanteth understanding, she [the harlot] saith unto him, Stolen waters are sweet, and bread eaten in secret is pleasant. But he knoweth not that the dead are there, and that her guests are in the depths of hell.”

By God the Lawgiver, who is sure to be offended ; by your own souls and bodies, which are sure to be ruined ; by your own fair fame, which is sure to be tarnished ; by your very substance, which is sure to be scattered, I appeal to you not to give “ your strength unto strange women ” but to flee this youthful lust.

For marriage, then, we have no safe nor legitimate substitute. Till we can enter into the holy estate of matrimony, we ought simply to practice self-control, and even then be guarded and temperate.

Under the names of chastity and continence, this is a virtue enforced and encouraged by all legislators and by all moralists. It lies at the root

of all durable society, and wherever or whenever it has departed, the society has decayed and finally perished from the face of the earth. And this virtue is equally the basis of every good man's character. To get the body under, and to keep it in perfect subjection to a resolute and chaste will, is certainly the first duty of every one who aspires to anything here or hereafter. Of course it is not easy. Self-denial and self-watchfulness are never easy, at least in their beginnings. And at puberty the body will crave, and will endeavor to break loose. Many are the pains and penalties in store for you if you let go the reins. Whether you rush into onanism or be seduced into harlotry, you will bitterly rue it. Before, then, you let go, I call upon you to take care ; or if you have unfortunately let go, before you are out of sight and out of hearing, whither vice will soon carry you, I cry to you earnestly to pull up and to turn back. Summon to your aid every good power of the world that is, and of the world that is to be. Get the government over yourselves, and keep it.

Understand, I do not say that you are to extirpate from your natures this appetite with its affections. I do not think that to be possible, nor, if possible, should I think it right. All I recommend is, that while you cannot help feeling the "flesh" stirring within you, you yet keep it in perfect check, till such time as in accordance with the laws of God and man you can yield to its cravings. This restraint, at first difficult and irksome, after a while becomes easy. The appetite

never indulged, lifts its voice only occasionally and gently.

Having come through the fire myself, I will try and help you, and will let you into a few secrets, and give you some counsels by means of which the victory over the flesh may be gained the more surely, and a permanent mastery secured. At the same time these counsels and secrets will aid materially those who have fallen into vicious ways, to quit these ways, and to enter into and maintain a purer life.

I. Cold Bathing.

Cold bathing, whether in the form of a plunge-bath, or of a shower-bath, or of a simple sponge-bath, is most excellent for all young persons. But the kind I particularly recommend for our present purpose is a cold hip-bath. Such a bath, taken night and morning, is invaluable for repressing all lewd affections of the body. Where circumstances prevent such a bath being procured, cold water poured upon the loins, or cold sponging of the loins, may be used as a makeshift. Neither is equal, however, to the hip-bath, which may be improvised by a simple small tub. Let the water be as cold as possible, sit in it for a quarter of an hour, then dry gently. The parts are thus kept clean and cool, and the comfort arising altogether from this little thing is really immense. Add an all-over wash with soap and cold water twice or thrice a week, and a vigorous general health is maintained.

II. *Hard Beds.*

Soft couches are the great breeders of vice, effeminaey, and immorality ; therefore lie always **HARD**. A simple mattress is all that is requisite.

And when in bed do not lie **TOO WARM**. Let the feet be abundantly covered, so that they are always warm, but let the other parts be simply comfortable. Heat is very apt to generate and encourage evil desires.

And do not lie **LONG** in bed. To bed early when fatigued and sleepy ; up at cock-crowing, and away to work, bodily or mental. Dallying in bed is ever dangerous.

And **LIE ALWAYS ALONE**. Every young man ought to have a bed for himself. However plain it may be, he ought to be its sole occupant. This is imperative. "Evil communications corrupt good manners." And nothing is communicated so rapidly as a vicious habit by a bed companion. The origin of all early indiscretions and youthful vices is to be traced very often to a "chum," who in the warm hours of night has hinted, or talked plainly, and at length has led astray.

And when in bed lie with your hands **ALWAYS ABOVE OR ABOUT YOUR HEAD**. Keep them strictly from the other parts of the body. This advice is to be rigorously obeyed. There is always a chance of mischief when it is disobeyed.

III. *Abundant Work.*

The good Watts never sang more truly than "Satan finds some mischief still for idle hands to

do." Have, therefore, always plenty to do, mentally and bodily. If your regular occupation give you not enough to think about, make work for yourselves. Learn a language—a first-rate mental exercise. Or go through a course of arithmetic, or algebra, or Euclid—all most excellent mental trainers and purifiers. Or go through a course of English literature, which you will find both interesting and good in every respect. Have a regular task, and every spare moment be at it. And when one task is done, appoint to yourselves another, that so your minds are never free for loose thoughts to creep in, or wanton imaginations to carry you captive. And mental work must not be all. If your occupation give you not enough bodily exercise, take plenty one way or another—long walks, till you be physically exhausted every evening, when you will go to bed pleasantly tired and sleepy, and your dreams will be few and harmless.

Be busy if you would be virtuous. That is an axiom as indisputable as any in geometry. And the reason why vice is so common among our easy classes is just because they have got nothing to do; and why it is so rampant among our lower classes, is that they do not know how to spend the hours unoccupied by bodily labor. But earnest, pure men have their heads and hands always full.

Physical Culture.—Work is an important factor in physical culture, but not all of it. There are many kinds of labor which are sedentary and do not exercise all of the body. To counteract the

evil effects of such occupations we have sports and athletic exercises which call into play all the faculties of the mind and body, such as boating, riding, swimming, the various games of ball, cricket, croquet, scaling, gymnastics, gardening, botanizing; the study of insects, minerals, out-door photography, painting, mechanics, etc., all of which have a favorable effect on the excessive and premature development of the passions.

IV. *Plain Food.*

Food, if made heating by different spices and sauces, or if it be too rich or too abundant, is sure to foster all manner of fleshly desires. The man of full habit is always a man of strong animal life. The food should be enough for our wants, and according to our work, and it should be plain, without any of those ingredients which burn our stomachs and heat our blood. I do not wish to reduce you to Spartan black bread, or to a meagre broth of lentils. I allow you flesh, fish and fowl, but in moderation, and without any of those little things which excite without nourishing.

And speaking of plain food, I must debar you from all stimulants, Wine and Women. The two "W's" have gone together from time immemorial, and they are still inseparable. And beers, porters and spirits are equally carnal as wine. Strike them off absolutely from your ordinary way of living, and let water be your habitual beverage. If you let the body loose in eating and drinking, you will find it difficult, if not impossible, to keep

it under in other respects. And even if you abstain from actual vice, you will be troubled with frequent impure motions and desires, which might be greatly moderated by a spare diet.

V. *Careful Reading.*

Books you must and will have, but be very careful in the selection. Avoid all obscene, impure and immoral reading. That as a matter of course. Such reading is poisonous. There is, however, a little, which is most certainly to be avoided. Nothing demoralizes so quickly and so completely as a bad book; and more than one wicked young man has traced his downward career to unclean reading.

Also avoid all kinds of amatory productions, and all that kind of literature called sensational, in which wives run away with other men, and the abandoned husbands shoot themselves, or shoot other people. To speak as mildly as possible, all such reading is of a loose or doubtful tendency, which may unsettle, but cannot strengthen in any good thing. Be not deceived into this reading by the idea that you will just take it up to see what it is like. "Can a man touch pitch, and not be defiled?" Nor be deceived by the idea that you will just look at it in order to criticise it, or in order to pick up the grains of gold which may be among the rubbish. That is a small pride very common among young men. But if you do not court a fall, leave such a task as that to your seniors, or till another decade has passed over your

own heads. Accordingly, I dissuade you against nearly all novel reading. I willingly allow you Scott, Dickens, Bulwer and Thackeray. They are pure and true. I also allow a few of the best magazines and miscellanies, and especially the *Herald of Health*, which is filled with sound, sensible articles on right living and the improvement of men physically, intellectually and morally. But a very great deal of what is written by some of our modern authors, even in most repute, is extremely unhealthy. The imagination is kindled by an unholy fire, and an excited depraved imagination is the beginning of most licentious actions. Indeed, the only really safe reading for young men is that which I have spoken of already. I will add technical reading—that is, reading connected with a profession or occupation. I will also add astronomy and geology, chemistry and natural philosophy—sciences of romantic interest and of the highest importance.

To those who have been overtaken with the faults of youth, in order to cleanse the mind from the accumulated nastiness, and in order to restore it to a healthy, vigorous tone, I prescribe with success a course of mathematics, or arithmetic, or a new language, or a new science. These are abstract subjects. They are in themselves the purest of the pure. They require the undivided attention to the exclusion of all other subjects. Their problems can be pondered walking or resting, in bed or out of bed, and their influence is great and effectual to purify and strengthen.

VI. *Choice of Companions.*

If it be necessary to be very select in your reading, it is, if possible, more necessary to be select in your companions. The wisdom of all ages preaches extreme carefulness in this respect. Therefore, first of all, never take for a companion or a friend a young man who has no aim in life. Choose one who has got an ambition to get on and to get up—physically, socially, and morally. Lazy, indolent, undetermined fellows, who do not know what they would like to be, nor what they would like to be at, who lounge about at home, or about the streets—all such loafers have nothing to do with. They may not be bad fellows. They may even be good fellows—that is to say, easy and pleasant. Still they will do you no good. Stick to those who will cry “hurrah” to you, and to whom you can cry “hurrah,” and with whom you can contend in loving emulation in the race of life.

And never choose a sneerer for a companion. Sneerers are mentally unwell ; and do you associate only with healthy people. Therefore, if a man sneers at poverty simply because it is poverty, or if he has a scornful word for the humble virtues of economy and thrift, or for the nobler virtue of “push,” eschew him. He is a dangerous associate for you.

Of course, never have a companion whose language is not perfectly correct, who is ever guilty of loose talk, or of indelicate conversation. It need scarcely be added that you never choose for com-

panions men whose characters are stamped with libertinism, or who are even suspected of immorality, and of frequenting immoral haunts. And have no secret companions. If your companions cannot bear the daylight, they are not worthy of you. If they cannot bear to be seen, known, and criticised of all men, cut them at once. In fact, in the choice and confirmation of your friendships and companionships, let your seniors judge, and do you follow their advice. Here, again, take care of being beset with the little pride of thinking yourselves competent to judge for yourselves. You are not. No more are you competent, though you may proudly think it, of reforming bad companions. A thousand to one you will not make them any better, but they will make you worse.

Therefore be sure to choose your companions well—persevering, honest, pure, right-thinking men; I would add, religious men. I do not care what little “ism” they may cleave to, but I would have them men of fervent faith in pure religion, and who aspire to live up to it. You are all right with these.

I insist so much upon the quality of your friends and companions, because their influence is almost unlimited in the formation of your habits. Much that is nasty and wicked in heart, speech, and behavior may be learned from associates, who first laugh at your greenness, then excite your imagination, and finally launch you on the boundless sea of corruption. I allow you to be very liberal in your choice of companions. Look not at their

politics, heed not their ecclesiasticalism, yea, be not particular, if you like, as to the texture of their clothes, or as to their social standing, but in the matter of morality, be stiff, starched, strait-laced ;—as latitudinarian as you like in every other respect, but no latitudinarianism here. Let your strictness be called primness, puritanism, or anything else ; remember that you are guarding your hearts, out of which are “the issues of life.” And if they get corrupted, out will come assuredly—the greatest Teacher has said it—“out will come adulteries, fornications, uncleanness.”

And speaking of companions naturally brings me to the society you ought to frequent. Now I say, avoid the society of taverns and bar-rooms. Not allowed yourselves to partake of stimulants, you have nothing to do there. If you happen to be traveling, hotels must be frequented as houses of refreshment. But when at home, to frequent vaults and similar places is disastrous to young men. The moral atmosphere there is decidedly bad.

Avoid equally the society of theaters. I say nothing against the drama, nor against the actors of comedy or of tragedy, but the company met with, the lights, the dances, and all the paraphernalia of playhouses, are not good for young men. The whole is a great deal too stimulating.

For a like reason, the society of public ball-rooms is not wholesome. The heated air, the dances, and the low dresses of the partners are certainly not good. And speaking of the dresses

of women, what is called low dress, or rather no dress, is worthy of the very gravest censure. Such dress is not safe for the wearers themselves. It exposes to dangerous colds. And the exhibition of naked chests before persons of the opposite sex is decidedly not delicate. Without any desire to approve of the abominable *Tartuffe* of Molière, I cannot help saying with him :

“ Couvrez ce sein que je ne saurais voir ;
Par de pareils objets les âmes sont blessées
Et cela fait venir de coupables pensées.”

Perhaps it may be thrown in my teeth, “Honi soit qui mal y pense.” Let that be as it may, I must have you to err on the safe side, and though I do not wish to make you either righteous overmuch, nor to make you male prudes, I must forbid you the ballroom.

However, the society of good and sensible women I highly approve of. I do not agree with some of the old ascetics, that “the touch of a woman is as much to be avoided as the bite of a mad dog.” The society of virtuous women is softening and elevating. I say nothing against a romp with such, nor against a dance with such in the homes of their parents, where an indelicate word or gesture would never be dreamed of. But walking much with young ladies alone I do not advise, nor am I fond of what is called keeping company with young women—talking and listening to useless nonsense when nothing is meant. A great deal of this is

carried on by the young men of the working-classes both in town and country. Should this sermon haply fall into their hands, I beg of them to be careful. It is a dangerous practice. As a flirtation it is contemptible, and too often ends in something worse, to the disgrace of the man and the ruin of the woman.

To sum up the whole of this matter : if there be any society or any amusement about which you have a doubt, avoid it. Do not argue about it, nor risk it. There is plenty of good society, and of excellent amusements, without having recourse to those concerning which there exists the shadow of a suspicion.

By all this I do not wish to make you a race of young muffs, or raw clowns, or innocent green-horns, or a set of sentimental namby-pambies who cannot say "boo" to a goose. Nor do I wish to set old heads upon young shoulders. All I wish is simply to see you a generation of young men, earnest, sober-minded, pure, and manly, who can say "no" with an emphasis, and who avoid all things that are avoidable on principle—the solid principle that they are not good for your bodily constitutions, nor your moral natures, much less for your spiritual growth. You are not ignorant of the sea of sin, vice, folly, pleasure, giddiness, and dissipation. You hear in the distance its roar and its moan, but warned, you venture not upon it. You are determined not even to risk shipwreck. Listen to one who tried to sail this sea, and met of course with disaster. It is Burns who speaks :

" Had I to guid advice but harkit,
 I might, ere this, hae led a market,
 Or strutted in a bank, an' clerkit,
 My cash account ;
 Whilst here, half-mad, half-fed, half-sarkit,
 Is a' th' amount."

Listen to another, who tried the same navigation, to meet only with the same fate. It is now Byron who speaks :

" Oh could I feel as I have felt, or be as I have been,
 Or weep as I was wont to weep, o'er many a vanished
 scene,
 As springs in deserts found seem sweet, all brackish
 though they be,
 So midst this withered waste of life those tears would
 flow to me."

VIII. *Religion.*

Of all the influences which can be brought to bear upon men for the subjugation of their baser natures, there are none superior to those of the Christian religion. The knowledge of its mighty truths, the practice of its sacred rites, and especially the study of the life and death and character of the Author and Finisher of our Christian Faith, are all most powerful to sanctify and strengthen. This purifying power is indeed the grand and distinguishing feature of Christianity. And not only its distinguishing feature, but one of the most striking proofs of its divine origin. Some religions make men worse ; some religions only polish men outwardly, but leave them inwardly and secretly unclean. It is not good nor pleasant to study too

intimately the paganisms of old Greece and Rome, and its sensual paradise has polluted the whole of Mahometanism. But the genuine Christianity of the Scriptures wars with and forbids every manner of sin and impurity, in thought and word as well as in action ; and whoever comes under its mighty influence will not be allowed to rest till, in its own expressive terms, he becomes “a new creature”—old things passing away, all things becoming new.

Under the name of religion, men have worn horsehair shirts, and horsehair girdles, in order to mortify the flesh. And, under the same name, men like St. Bernard have thrown themselves into thorn bushes in order to calm the paroxysms of ardent natures, or they have thrashed themselves with knotted ropes till the blood has streamed along their backs. But such bodily exercise is not religion, and according to a great teacher of Christianity, “profiteth little”—that is, it helpeth little in the way of subduing the flesh. Still it may aid somewhat, and we are not to despise the men who have used, or who do use in secret, such strong measures in order to acquire perfect dominion over themselves. On the contrary, all honor to them. And really there are many young men, and many old men too, so utterly void of all self-control as regards every one of their appetites, that we verily request them to try those sharp means in order to gain the mastery ; and if they have not the courage to try, we can only wish that the law allowed us to take a rope’s end and apply it soundly to their bare skins. It would at least

be a little penance for past excesses, and it might possibly serve as a preventive against future outbreaks.

Yet, after all, it is the getting down and the keeping down of the imaginations and desires wherein the true victory consisteth, and this victory a religious faith giveth. I will say nothing of the supernatural influence which every Christian believes he can receive from above for the asking. Each time he kneels and prays, "Lead us not into temptation," he rises empowered to say to every tempter, "Get thee behind me, Satan." Apart from that, I say, cultivate a thorough acquaintance with genuine religion in its higher and nobler forms; let its doctrines get an entire command over your whole beings; study its records, and from the whole there will come a power mighty to subdue and purify. Tens of thousands have experienced it. If many have professed religion and yet have exhibited no signs of its influence, it is simply because they have not been truthful. They have not put themselves fairly, honestly, and willingly under its power. They have only nominally given themselves unto it, resolved all the time to keep, in spite of it, their natures unchanged. Therefore the result in their cases has been void. But if with good and honest hearts you receive religion and allow it to rule and to mold you, as sure as the powerful drug circling in the blood masters the body, so shall the religious faith pervading your moral beings, change and dominate them.

VIII. *Medicine.*

If you follow rigidly the counsels I have given you, you will require little or no medicine. A slight tonic, composed of a few drops of tincture of iron and a grain of sulphate of quinine, taken in a wineglassful of cold water twice daily, may be useful in bracing the growing frame, and in restraining any excess in our natural evacuations. For be it known that all young unmarried men who lead chaste lives will have occasional losses of spermatic fluid. These are perfectly natural, and are not the least alarming. They occur of a night, once a fortnight, or once a week, or even oftener, if the habit be full, and the health florid ; but they are simply Nature relieving herself of an overplus, and are not to be thought of. Should they be at all excessive, the cold hip-bath, and the simple tonic prescribed above, will soon control them. A diet of brown bread, fruit and milk will prevent all costiveness, which is injurious.

In case, however, of it happening that you become alarmed concerning something in your frames, or that you be overtaken in a fault, or that you be smitten with a foul disease, for which you have yourselves alone to blame—such things have happened, do happen, and will happen ; I do not expect to make you all virtuous, or all saints by this sermon, however much I may wish it, and for your sakes I do wish it from the bottom of my heart of hearts—still if such a thing occur, be entreated to go straightway to an honest, sympathetic and well-qualified physician. Do not at-

tempt to treat yourselves. To a certainty you will fail, whatever treatise you follow, for the simple reason, if there be none else, that you require a medical man as much to comfort you as to cure you. And have nothing to do with those *soi-disant* practitioners who advertise and puff, flooding our newspapers and plastering our walls with their nauseous announcements. They are all, without exception, unmitigated rascals. Be not even tempted to read their books ; or if, by misfortune, you have read them, forget absolutely all that you have read. The consequences of early vice are bad enough, and the dangers of disease are terrible enough, in all truth. Still they are invariably overdrawn by those fellows whose whole object is to frighten and then to fleece. Woe indeed betide you if you get into their hands. In fact, the less you read on such subjects the better. If you take my advice you will read none at all. In case of need, real or imaginary, go at once to a respectable medical man. Tell him simply your whole story. Or if you have not the courage to do that, write out a brief account for his perusal. He is sure to receive you kindly, remembering that he himself was once young. He will calm your apprehensions instead of terrifying you, and cure you without robbing you. Be not afraid of him knowing nothing about such cases. The humblest apothecary among us knows a great deal more than those unlettered, unprincipled pretenders. Neither be deterred by the thought that he may by word or look divulge your little secret either to

father or mother or to the public. Medical men never think of speaking about their patients, and names and cases are always inviolable.

And here I must caution you against one thing. Be not impatient under medical treatment. The physician, whether the case be one of secret sin or secret disease, has too often, as already hinted, not only your bodies but your minds to cure, and it is those latter which are generally the more difficult to put to rights. They have got into a state of morbid anxiety which it is nearly impossible to allay. Be assured that if you have put yourselves into proper hands, and are following the advice given, you will get well. Help forward the cure by banishing from your thoughts all feelings and fears concerning your state, which often exist and annoy long after all evil effects have left your bodies.

My young friends, my sermon is ended. If you obey it, you will grow up young men of worth and virtue, vigorous in limb, strong in will, perfect masters of self. You will enter into the open world well equipped to do good service, and as sons, brothers, and husbands you are sure to bear excellent names; and as citizens, men of business, or professional men, artisans, or whatever else, you are sure to make your mark for good in your spheres, upon your day and generation.

For giving such a sermon, I make no apology.

The subject is certainly a delicate one. Therefore it is generally tabooed and avoided. Our preachers scarcely touch it. Our lecturers slur it over. The elders, deacons, and office-bearers of our churches shake their wise heads, or draw long faces concerning it. Our medical writers of repute never treat it in anything like a popular manner. And young men are left to plunge through early manhood the best way they can—either to sink in the slough, or be plundered by vile empirics. This wrongful neglect on the part of better men, in a very imperfect, and I fear slovenly manner, I have here attempted to remedy. If I be the means of guiding one through the slippery paths of youth, and ushering him into a pure and healthy manhood, or if I be simply the means of warning one against a pitfall, or recalling one from the downward course of vice, I shall be perfectly satisfied. “Verily, I shall in nowise lose my reward.”

Neither do I apologize for the plain speaking of which I have been guilty in this sermon. I have certainly called “a spade a spade,” and in speaking of a vice I have given to it its vulgar and ugly name. And I do not think that I have been wrong in using such unveiled language. I am perfectly well acquainted with the trite words of Pope :

“Vice is a monster of so frightful mien
As to be hated needs but to be seen ;
Yet seen too oft, familiar with her face,
We first endure, then pity, then embrace.”

And I am quite aware of the delicacy which should as a rule shroud such topics. And I quite agree

with Paul in a general way, when he says : “ But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named amongst you.” All perfectly correct. Yet never to speak of these things, but to appear everlastingly ignorant of them, while they prevail as horribly in our midst, and never to point out their danger, while so many dear and near are liable to fall into them, and be carried away by them, is to live like fools in a fool’s paradise. In my opinion, the father should occasionally, solemnly and plainly, tell his growing sons of the danger ahead. And the pastor should plainly and earnestly tell the young males of his flock of the rocks and breakers in their vicinity during this portion of life’s voyage. Now and then, undoubtedly, without any fear of shocking a delicacy, or suggesting a malpractice, or making a natural monster comely by familiarity, the veil should be torn aside from secret sins and secret vices. And when this is done, there should be no mincing matters, no beating about the bush, but plain unmistakable language used, so that there be no conjecturing about the sin aimed at, but the sin be fairly hit, and its loathsomeness and peril beheld at a glance. This I have endeavored to do. I am not afraid that I have wounded the sensitiveness, or put to the blush the modesty of one sensible person. I am only afraid that, while sufficiently plain, I have not been sufficiently terse. Yet I repeat, that if I be the means of saving one, or warning one, or reclaiming one, or aiding one, I shall be contented. “ Verily, I shall in nowise lose my reward.”

APPENDIX.

EXTRACT FROM HUFELAND.

THERE was a time when the German youth never thought of marriage and intimacy with the other sex till their twenty-fourth or twenty-fifth year ; and yet nothing was then known of the pernicious consequences of this chastity, nor of many other imaginary evils of which people now dream ; but these youths, increasing in strength as well as growth, became men who by their size excited the astonishment even of the Romans.

People now leave off at the period when these began. They imagine they can never soon enough throw off their chastity, and young persons, long before their bodies are completely finished, begin to waste those powers which are destined for a higher use. The consequences are evident. These men become incomplete, half-formed beings ; and at the period when our ancestors began to employ those powers, they, in them, are generally exhausted ; they feel nothing but dejection and misery in their weakness ; and a stimulus, of the utmost importance for seasoning life, is to them forever lost.

It is incredible how far prejudice in this respect

may be carried, especially when it flatters our inclination. I once knew a man who seriously believed that there was no poison more prejudicial to the human body than continence, and the consequence was, that he was an old man in his twentieth year, and in his twenty-fifth died of old age,

The present age has fallen so much into the taste of the times of chivalry, that all romances must now assume that form in order to please; and one, indeed, cannot help admiring the great, noble and resolute manner of thinking and acting of these old Germans. It appears that the more sensible we are how far we have degenerated from them, the more we are excited by their example, and the more we are inflamed with a desire to imitate their conduct. But what a happiness would it be if we did not think merely of the object, but of the means to obtain it. That by which these people acquired so much courage, so great powers both of body and mind, their bold, firm and resolute character, which made them real men in the utmost sense of the word, was, in particular, their strict continence. The youth of these men was destined to great exploits and undertakings, not to voluptuousness and dissipation; the physical propensity to love, did not, among them, sink into mere animal enjoyment, but was exalted to a moral incitement to noble and heroic actions. Each bore in his heart the image of his beloved object, whether real or imaginary; and this romantic love, this indissoluble attachment, was the shield of his continence and virtue, strengthened

the powers of his body, and communicated to his mind, courage and unalterable resolution, by continually directing his attention to his fair one smiling to him at a distance, and whose favor could be gained only by glorious achievements. However romantic these notions may be, I find on closer examination great wisdom in this use of physical love,—one of the strongest motives by which human nature is actuated. How widely different has the case become among us ! This propensity, which by prudent management may be made the germ of the most exalted virtue, of the greatest heroism, has degenerated into whining sensibility or mere sensual gratification, which people enjoy prematurely, and even to satiety ; the passion of love which in those periods was a security against dissipation, is at present the source of the greatest ; the virtue of chastity, the principal foundation, without doubt, of moral firmness and manliness of character, has become a subject of ridicule, and is descried as old-fashioned pedantry ; and what ought to be the last and sweetest reward of toil, labor and danger, has become a flower which every stripling crops by the way. Why does Nature excite in our bosom this sighing after union, this all-powerful, irresistible propensity to love ? Not, truly, to afford subjects for romance, or to make a figure in the ecstatic raptures of poetry ; but that it may serve as an indissoluble band to unite two hearts, to lay the ground for a happy generation ; and that by this magic tie, our existence may be connected with the first and the most sacred

of all duties. How fortunate would it be were we here to imitate the ancient method, and never to pull the fruit until we had planted.

At present we hear a great deal of strength and strong men, but I will believe nothing of it as long as I see that they have not strength enough to subdue their passions; for that is the only cause of triumph as well as the only sign of mental strength; and chastity is the school in which youth ought to be exercised, and to form themselves for becoming strong men.

We in general find, in the old world, that all those from whom anything great or glorious was expected, were obliged to restrain physical love. So much were people then convinced that Venus absorbs the whole power of man, and that those given up to dissipation could never attain an exalted position.

THE END.

